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SUBJECT: FINNISH RESPONSE - BHUTTO ASSASSINATION AND US
POLICY FOR PAKISTAN'S ELECTIONS

REF: SECSTATE 170928

(SBU) PolChief raised subject demarche with Johan Schalin, Office Director of the Finnish MFA's Unit for Asia. Schalin said Finland generally shared our views regarding the need for united international community support to Pakistan as it seeks to continue the journey toward democracy. However, Schalin also stressed that elections are only one part of the democratization process; the GoF does not oppose holding them as scheduled, provided they do not undermine voter confidence or, worse, lead to further political instability or violence.

He added that the Bhutto assassination makes it "very difficult to imagine" that free, fair and non-violent elections can still be held on January 8.

HYATT